

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-12

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DRAFTED BY EA/ROC:DGBROWN/HJFELDMAN:SJP

APPROVED BY EA:RWSULLIVAN

PM/SAS:DROGERS (DRAFT)

NSC:MOKSENBERG (DRAFT)

DOD/ISA:CDR. SMITH (DRAFT)

JCS:COL. QUACKENBUSH (DRAFT)

S/P:AROMBERG (DRAFT)

EA/PRCM:HTHAYER (DRAFT)

EA/RA-PMU:LT. COL. EILAND (DRAFT)

PM/MC:CROBINSON (DRAFT)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HAWAII 0720

S E C R E T STATE 167924

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: MILI, TW

SUBJECT: ROC RESTRAINT IN TAIWAN STRAIT: LOROP CAMERAS

1. DEPT. AND OTHER WASHINGTON AGENCIES HAVE AGAIN
REVIEWED ROC'S REQUEST TO PURCHASE LONG RANGE OBLIQUE
PHOTOGRAPHY (LOROP) CAMERAS IN ORDER TO DETERMINE HOW OUR
HANDLING OF THIS REQUEST CAN BEST FURTHER OUR OBJECTIVE
OF REDUCING THE CHANCES OF MILITARY INCIDENTS IN THE

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TAIWAN STRAIT. WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT APPROVAL OF THE
SALE ON CERTAIN SPECIFIC CONDITIONS CAN BE USED AS AN
INCENTIVE FOR ROC ACCOMMODATION OF OUR MAY 18 DEMARCHE.
POSSESSION OF THE LOROP CAMERAS SHOULD REDUCE THE DANGER
OF AN INCIDENT ARISING FROM ROC EFFORTS TO OBTAIN ADEQUATE
RECONNAISSANCE PHOTOGRAPHY USING THEIR CURRENT PANORAMIC
CAMERAS. THERE IS A STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT SUCH AN EFFORT

WAS THE CAUSE OF THE MAY 9 NEAR INCIDENT WHICH TRIGGERED OUR DEMARCHE.

2. THE ROC APPARENTLY HAS NOT UNDERSTOOD THAT THE USG ALL ALONG HAS TAKEN THE POSITION THAT THE STANDOFF DISTANCE TO BE OBSERVED BY THE ROC WAS TO BE MEASURED FROM PRC-HELD TERRITORY INCLUDING ISLANDS. ONE PURPOSE OF OUR MAY 18 DEMARCHE WAS TO MAKE THIS POINT EXPLICIT. WHILE NOW COGNIZANT OF THE USG POSITION, IT IS CLEAR THAT ELEMENTS

IN THE ROCAF ARE UNHAPPY WITH THIS INTERPRETATION BECAUSE MEASUREMENT FROM ISLANDS WOULD REQUIRE THEM TO REMAIN FARTHER OFF-SHORE THAN WOULD MEASUREMENT FROM THE MAINLAND ONLY. OUR INTENTION NOW IS TO MAKE SALE OF THE LOROP CAMERAS CONDITIONAL ON EXPLICIT WRITTEN ASSURANCES FROM THE ROC, WHICH ADM. SUNG HAS PREVIOUSLY OFFERED, BUT TO REQUIRE THAT ALL ROC AIRCRAFT WILL OBSERVE THE STAND-OFF DISTANCE MEASURED FROM ISLANDS AS WELL AS THE MAINLAND, WITH AN EXCEPTION ONLY FOR THE FLIGHTS TO, FROM OR OVER ROC HELD OFF-SHORE ISLANDS.

3. EMBASSY SHOULD CALL AT MOFA AT AN APPROPRIATELY HIGH LEVEL TO CONVEY USG WILLINGNESS TO APPROVE SALE OF UP TO SIX LOROP CAMERAS, MAKING THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- FROM OUR DISCUSSIONS OF THE TAIWAN STRAIT LAST YEAR,
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AND AGAIN THIS YEAR, YOU ARE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE WE PLACE UPON AVOIDING INCIDENTS.

-- YOU WILL RECALL OUR AGREEMENT THAT ROC PLANES REMAIN SUFFICIENTLY OUTSIDE PRC-CLAIMED TERRITORIAL LIMITS TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF AN INCIDENT. IN HIS MAY 18 DEMARCHE ON THIS SUBJECT, AMBASSADOR UNGER STATED THE U.S. VIEW THAT THE EXISTING STAND-OFF DISTANCE BEING OBSERVED BY THE ROCAF MUST BE MEASURED FROM PRC-HELD ISLANDS AS WELL AS FROM THE MAINLAND.

-- WE RECOGNIZE THAT OBSERVING A SUFFICIENT STAND-OFF DISTANCE MAY HAVE SOME IMPACT ON YOUR RECONNAISSANCE CAPABILITY.

-- AS YOU KNOW, THE U.S. HAS HAD PENDING A REQUEST FROM MND TO PURCHASE LONG RANGE OBLIQUE PHOTOGRAPHY (LOROP) CAMERAS.

-- IN REQUESTING THESE CAMERAS, COS ADMIRAL SUNG GAVE MAAG A LETTER IN NOVEMBER 1976 STATING THAT LOROP EQUIPPED AIRCRAFT WOULD NOT APPROACH CLOSER THAN 15 NM FROM THE

PRC COAST.

-- THE USG HAS DECIDED THAT IF WE CAN BE ASSURED IN WRITING THAT ALL ROC AIRCRAFT, INCLUDING RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT, WILL OBSERVE THIS STAND-OFF DISTANCE MEASURING THE DISTANCE FROM ALL PRC HELD TERRITORY, INCLUDING PRC HELD ISLANDS, THE USG WOULD BE WILLING TO AUTHORIZE SALE OF UP TO SIX LOROP CAMERAS.

-- WE RECOGNIZE THAT FLIGHTS TO, FROM OR OVER ROC HELD OFF-SHORE ISLANDS WOULD BE AN EXCEPTION TO THIS STAND-OFF DISTANCE.

-- AS SOON AS THE ROC GOVERNMENT HAS PROVIDED THE EMBASSY
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A LETTER INDICATING THAT THESE CONDITIONS ARE AGREEABLE TO THE ROC, WE WILL AUTHORIZE THE VARIOUS U.S. FIRMS TO RELEASE THE APPROPRIATE TECHNICAL DATA TO ENABLE YOU TO CHOOSE A SUPPLIER.

-- WE WOULD APPRECIATE BEING INFORMED WHICH FIRM'S LOROP CAMERAS YOU DECIDE TO PURCHASE SO THAT WE MAY EXPEDITIOUSLY ISSUE THE APPROPRIATE EXPORT LICENSES.

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